

INFO	LOG-00	EEB-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	DOEE-00	DOTE-00
	PDI-00	DS-00	DHSE-00	FAAE-00	FBIE-00	UTED-00	VCI-00
	H-00	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00	L-00	MOFM-00	MOF-00
	CDC-00	VCIE-00	DCP-00	NSAE-00	ISN-00	OMB-00	EPAU-00
	PA-00	PM-00	GIWI-00	PRS-00	P-00	ISNE-00	DOHS-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	TRSE-00	T-00	NCTC-00	FMP-00	BBG-00
	R-00	EPAE-00	ECA-00	IIP-00	SCRS-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00
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DEPT FOR EAP/J, EAP/P, EAP/PD, PA/PRS;
 WHITE HOUSE/NSC;
 PACOM FOR J00/J01/J5;
 DOD FOR OSD/APSA - SEDNEY/HILL/BASALLA;
 USFJ FOR J00/J01/J5

E.O. 12958: N/A
 TAGS: [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [JA](#)

SUBJECT: Media reaction to DPRK missile launch

¶1. Summary. Starting with the countdown to the April 5 launch of a ballistic missile by North Korea and continuing into the intense negotiations in the United Nations Security Council, the Japanese press has documented in its news coverage, commentary and editorials the close coordination and cooperation of the United States and Japan, first militarily and then diplomatically, in meeting Pyongyang's challenge. Experts appearing on TV talk shows also reinforced the strong and clear impression that the latest provocation from the North has served to make the military alliance stronger than ever and reinforced diplomatic ties that seemed to be somewhat adrift following last year's stalling of Six-Party talks. End summary.

U.S., Japan military cooperation seamless

¶2. Press reporting on the North Korean missile launch on April 5 revealed the virtually seamless web of cooperation between the two governments, in particular the defense establishments, to track the launch and evaluate the results, transmitting and exchanging data immediately. Even the usually alliance-critical Tokyo Shimbun in a sidebar on MD had to agree that the missile defense system introduced with great doubts in Japan was functioning and had now paid off, thanks to the joint efforts of the U.S. and Japan over the years.

¶3. Not surprisingly, talk of enhancing Japan's defense capabilities erupted after the launch, but always within the solid context of the alliance and the shared

MD system. Some of the experts on the Sunday talk shows called for Japan to beef up its missile defense system even more, since the threat from the North was not likely to go away. The conservative Sankei, in its MD critique, came out strongly for an expansion of the system, which it saw as a diplomatic tool against the North: "The MD system is not just a weapon but a diplomatic tool. Therefore, as in the case with the cost related to reconnaissance satellites, funds must be contributed to the MD system, including an early-warning satellite, separate from the framework of defense spending. That is the major lesson learned from the latest missile satellite."

¶4. The Yomiuri, in a series designed to critique a "drifting alliance," failed in the latest April 7 installment to prove its point when addressing the aftermath of the missile launch. The daily could not help but praise the joint military effort: "In 2006, determining that North Korea would not launch a missile, the U.S. military did not order Cobra Balls designed to observe ballistic missile flights at long range, deployed at Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, to take off. In that sense, this is the first time for the Self-Defense Forces and the U.S. military to have tracked a missile in cooperation." The article tries to show with a few quotes from officials that a gap still remains between the two military sides, but read carefully, the narrative in reality shows a smooth division of labor in tracking the missile from start to finish.

Asahi sees diplomatic cooperation as key

¶5. Editorials in the national dailies all seemed to be singing from the same score in strongly backing U.S.-Japanese diplomatic cooperation to deal with the North's latest act. In a strongly worded editorial that condemned North Korea's missile launch as an "unacceptable provocation" and an "outrageous act" toward which "we feel great indignation," the liberal Asahi urged Japan and the U.S. to form "a united front" to respond to the challenge diplomatically.

¶6. Aware of the ongoing cooperative effort by the U.S., Japan, and South Korea to bring the issue to the United Nations Security Council, the daily urged Tokyo to "work with the United States and other allies to step up diplomatic efforts to ensure that the international community sends an unequivocal message to North Korea." The Asahi concluded that only "diplomacy is the realistic avenue to stop North Korea from committing illegal acts." It urged joint efforts to revive the six-party talks with the North and the denuclearization process, while making "a renewed drive to promote negotiations with the North for normalization of diplomatic relations with Japan and the United States."

¶7. The Asahi concluded: "The United States has a vital role and a responsibility in such diplomatic efforts;" and it urged the setting up of a team to deal with North Korea and negotiations as soon as possible. The daily applauded Secretary Clinton for "moving in the right direction" in terms of dealing with the launch separately and seeking to revive the six-party agreement on the nuclear front.

¶8. The Sankei in an analytical series, "Shock from the North," stressed in the April 7 installment that compared to allies' response to the North's missile launch in 2006, this time there was strong solidarity among the U.S., Japan and South Korea - the weak link last time being Tokyo's then cool relations with Seoul. This time there was a "cooperative" relationship from the start, when it was first suspected that Pyongyang was preparing for another missile launch. Those ties were firmly cemented at a meeting in Washington of delegates of the three countries on March 27, the daily

judged.

¶9. The moderately conservative Yomiuri, in an editorial titled "North Korea puts ball in Obama's court," focused both on the President's Prague speech on nuclear nonproliferation and the North Korea missile launch. Noting that Sunday's launch violated Security Council Resolution 1718, the daily, too, put great emphasis on a diplomatic solution through the cooperative efforts of Japan, the U.S., Britain and France to persuade reluctant Security Council members China and Russia to agree to a new resolution with teeth. None of the dailies, incidentally, thought that such would be easy, and some assumed that in the end even a strong chairman's statement backed by all would be better than a weak, watered-down resolution. Indeed, the blow-by-blow description of the tussle in the UNSC, as seen in the evening editions of April 7, again stressed U.S.-Japan cooperation, in this case to convince all 15 members to accept that the missile launch was "a violation" of the earlier UNSC resolution.

¶10. Failure to do anything in the Council, the Yomiuri editorial of April 7 continued, would allow "the reclusive DPRK to continue to use its nuclear arms and missiles to provoke and threaten others." It expected President Obama, in particular, to "exercise strong leadership" not only in the immediate UNSC challenge, but also in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, noting that "if North Korea succeeds in building a miniaturized nuclear warhead, Japan will be staring down the barrel of a terrifying threat."

¶11. Coming just after North Korea's missile launch, the GOJ welcomed President Obama's Prague speech about nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Chief Cabinet Secretary Kawamura indicated that the President's new initiative would strengthen U.S.-Japan cooperation to meet that international goal. The speech also received high praise from the major dailies in editorials on April 7, some specifically linking the President's ambitious goal to the North Korean problem.

ZUMWALT